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# HERALD

**SUNDAY**

DECEMBER 9, 2007



VOLUME 103, NUMBER 7

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## Jingle stripes?

*BSHS band to throw a few twists in holiday concert*

By **STEVE REAGAN**

Staff Writer

If you ever wondered what would happen if you mixed "Jingle Bells" and "Stars and Stripes Forever," the Big Spring High School Band has the solution for you.

The band will hold its annual Christmas concert at 7 p.m. Monday in the high school auditorium. Admission will be a non-perishable food item to support the Salvation Army's canned food drive.

Director Rocky Harris said this will not be your typical Christmas concert. For sure, there will be lots and lots of Christmas tunes — but with a twist here and there.

The concert, titled "Fanfare For Christmas," will feature a musical interpretation of "The Night Before Christmas," complete with narration by BSHS alumni Nick Ross.

"It's a symphonic portrait of the children's story," Harris said. "It's really a quite clever interpretation."

The band then will pay tribute to one of its own when it dedicates its performance of "Slavonic Folk Suite" to Robert "R.J." Volker, a band alumni who died in combat in Iraq in December 2006.

"R.J. was dependable, he always played strong and he was well-liked by

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**Big Spring firefighters responded to two house fire calls Saturday morning — on the 1200 block of Lamar (above photo) and the 1500 block of Scurry (at left). No damage estimates or injury reports were available at press time.**

HERALD photos/Steve Reagan

## Moore board looks to finalize Settles contract

*Group to convene at 5:15 p.m. Monday*

By **THOMAS JENKINS**

Staff Writer

The board of directors for Moore Development for Big Spring could put its stamp of approval on a \$3 million agreement with the Settles Hotel Development Company Monday night, as it considers final approval of a performance agreement for the redevelopment of the historic downtown hotel.

Moore Development directors voted unanimously in April to provide up to \$3 million to help Brint Ryan — manager of the Dallas company and the founder and CEO of Ryan & Company — renovate the Settles Hotel, which he agreed to purchase for \$75,000 from the city of Big Spring.

While SHDC has yet to

**"It's a situation where neither side is really thrilled with the contract, but that's what negotiations are all about."**



—Terry Wegman, Moore Development executive director

take ownership of the Settles — the \$75,000 has remained in escrow, according to city officials — the company has moved forward with the purchase of several other properties near the down-

See **MOORE**, Page 3A

## Tax abatements on county agenda

*Ban on aerial fireworks also in the works as holidays near*

By **THOMAS JENKINS**

Staff Writer

The Howard County Commissioner's Court will be considering a number of different tax abatements Monday morning, ranging from wind energy projects to the ongoing effort to redevelop the historic Settles Hotel.

Terry Wegman, executive director for Moore Development — the local agency that acts as liaison between the wind energy companies and the county's taxing entities for the purpose of tax abatements — will be pre-

**"To place a ban on aerial fireworks — we're talking about things like bottle rockets — you have to do so before Dec. 15. And I'm really afraid of what this season could bring with so much fuel out there."**

—County Judge Mark Barr



sending the court with tax abatement agreements with five different wind energy developers.

"What's listed on the meeting agenda is basically the necessary steps for the county to grant the tax abatements," said

Wegman. "We'll be considering five different companies, Airtricity (Panther Creek Wind Farm project), Padoma (Elbow Creek project), Duke (Ocotillo Windpower project), Invenergy (Gunsight Mountain Wind

Energy project) and Iberdola (Wildhorse Mountain Wind Energy project).

"Four of the companies are expecting to begin and complete their projects before the end of 2008, while Iberdola has moved its project back to be completed by the end of 2009. They all look very viable, and I feel like we're looking at some promising projects."

Wegman said the court will hold a public hearing on the proposed abatement agreements, and possibly give the contracts

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### VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Clem Jones has been selected as the Hangar 25 Air Museum Veteran of the Month for December.

A reception in his honor will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the museum's Briefing Room.

The public is invited and refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact the museum at 264-1999.



### MAD DASH FOR GAS

MINOCQUA, Wis. (AP) — Dozens of drivers made a mad rush for cheap gas after a station employee accidentally changed the price to 33 cents a gallon.

An employee closing Trig's Minocqua Shell for the night mistakenly entered the price of a gallon of gasoline as 32.9 cents instead of \$3.299 Monday night.

He left about 10 p.m., but drivers could still use their credit cards to buy gas.

Word of the bargain spread fast, with 42 people buying 586 gallons of gas in an hour and 45 minutes. Local police saw the horde at the station and called store manager Andrea Reuland, who went to the station and pushed the emergency stop.

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**MOORE**

Continued from Page 1A

town landmark. According to Terry Wegman, executive director of Moore Development, the board is expected to consider a performance agreement, escrow agreement and a guaranty agreement between the econom-

ic development corporation and Ryan's company. "Brint (Ryan) is up against some deadlines right now," said Wegman. "He needs this agreement with Moore Development and some things from the city to move forward, and that's what we're trying to do, is move forward with this project." Wegman said the board will meet in an executive session to

hammer out the last of the details prior to taking a vote. "It's a situation where neither side is really thrilled with the contract, but that's what negotiations are all about," said Wegman. "You have to be willing to compromise on some things, and I feel like we're making progress at this point." Since announcing the project, Ryan and SHDC have also acquired several other proper-

ties, including 313 and 315 Runnels, adjacent to the Settles Hotel, which served as a Greyhound station during the hotel's heyday. SHDC got a helpful nod from the Texas Historical Commission, which confirmed eligibility of the downtown landmark to be nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in May, making the project an

"excellent candidate" for federal tax credits, according to Ryan. The meeting will begin at 5:15 p.m. Monday in the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce board room, located at 215 W. Third Street. *Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@big-springherald.com*

**COUNTY**

Continued from Page 1A

their approval. In addition to the various wind projects, Wegman said he and City Attorney Linda Sjogren will also be presenting the court with a tax abatement agreement for the Settles Hotel Development Company. The company has announced a \$12 million renovation project which includes plans for commercial and residen-

tial use of the property, with retail space available on the first and second floors. "We're hoping to pull everything together on this project Monday," said Wegman. "The Moore Board will be considering approval of Moore Development's contract with SHDC that evening. (Sjogren) is more familiar with this abatement agreement than I am, but I believe the talk at this point has been for a 10-year abatement of 100 percent of the taxes for

the project." Also on Monday's agenda, commissioners are to hear a report from Sandra Bloom, county elections administrator, regarding the March political party primaries, as well as discuss possibly changing polling places. County Judge Mark Barr said the court will also be considering a ban on aerial fireworks during the meeting. "To place a ban on aerial fireworks — we're talking about things like bot-

tle rockets — you have to do so before Dec. 15," said Barr. "And I'm really afraid of what this season could bring with so much fuel out there." The court recently approved a burn ban in Howard County, which is good for 90 days, according to Barr. "At the end of that 90 day period, we can either let the ban lapse or we can renew it," said Barr. "I'm really not sure what we'll be doing at this point. If we've received plenty of rain and things

look better, we might let it lapse. If it's still windy and dry — which it will most likely be — then I'm sure we'll renew it. It all depends on what the situation is. We just want to make sure people understand how incredibly dangerous it is right now." The meeting will get under way at 10 a.m. Monday in the commissioner's courtroom, locat-

ed on the second floor of the Howard County Courthouse. *Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@big-springherald.com*

**CONCERT**

Continued from Page 1A

everybody," Harris said. The band will then turn to a lighter note, when it combines Christmas and July 4 with "Jingle Bells Forever." "And, of course, a Christmas concert wouldn't be complete without a

sing-along, so we'll ask the audience to participate in helping us sing some traditional holiday songs," Harris said. The concert finale will be a performance of the songs used in Big Spring's 2007 UIL marching contest program, he said. Other BSISD bands will perform Christmas programs, also. The junior

high band will present its concert at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in the junior high gymnasium, while the Goliad Intermediate beginner band will hold a Christmas concert at 6 p.m. Dec. 18 in the Goliad gym. *Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331, ext. 234 or by e-mail at reporter@big-springherald.com.*

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Ted O. Groebel, III, 42, died Thursday. Memorial Services will be at 4 p.m. Monday at Coahoma Church of Christ. The family will receive friends from 4 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. Sunday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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